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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/22/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNMIK](#) [PO](#) [EU](#)
SUBJECT: KOSOVO: TIMING OF PORTUGUESE RECOGNITION REMAINS
UNCLEAR

REF: A. STATE 17891

- [1](#)B. STATE 15111 AND PREVIOUS
- [1](#)C. LISBON 410
- [1](#)D. LISBON 351
- [1](#)E. LISBON 350 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Political/economic counselor Matt Harrington for reasons
1.4 (B) and (D).

[1](#)1. (C) In several discussions with senior Portuguese officials on February 22 on the margins of the U.S.-Portugal Bilateral Commission, Ambassador and visiting PDAS Kurt Volker, per ref A, pressed hard for Portugal to recognize Kosovo as soon as possible. Volker noted Kosovo's unique history and underscored that this is an opportunity for the Balkans as a whole to move forward. The unresolved status of Kosovo, he said, has held back the entire Balkans region. The Ambassador emphasized several times that, the sooner large numbers of countries recognize, the quicker Russia and Serbia will be forced to accept the inevitability of independence.

[1](#)2. (C) MFA political director Vasco Brama Ramos said Portugal is "fully committed" to Kosovo's independence but is very worried about the consequences. Regardless of how forcefully all of us make the argument to the contrary, many will cite it as a precedent to advance their own political objectives, the political director insisted. Brama Ramos noted that, in Portugal's case, it is the Executive Branch which will confer recognition, and the Foreign Minister is now consulting with the National Assembly and political parties. The Council of Ministers would address the issue in the next week or two, after which the Prime Minister and President will make a final decision.

[1](#)3. (C) During a dinner the evening of February 22 at the CMR, in honor of PDAS Volker, Deputy Minister of Defense Joao Mira Gomes emphasized that Kosovo independence is a fact and the focus must now be on the future. He identified what he thought ought to be the international community's top priorities in Kosovo: helping it become a viable nation and continuing efforts to convince Serbia that its future lies in Europe. Volker concurred with those priorities.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: We continue to press for quick recognition by Portugal at all levels and in virtually every appropriate conversation. We remain convinced that Portugal will ultimately recognize, but that the GOP wants to be seen as consulting broadly within Portuguese society before taking the final step. And it is safe to say that Portugal generally prefers to go along with the plurality (if not majority in this case) of EU member states on most controversial issues. The most definitive information we have been able to extract from the GOP on the timing of recognition came in recent conversations with FM Amado -- who said he would push for Portugal to be among the "first wave" -- and from Brama Ramos -- who estimated a month after the

CDI.

15. (U) PDAS Volker did not have an opportunity to clear this message prior to his departure from Lisbon.
Stephenson